



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169
A Tradition of Service



February 04, 2014

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**AUTHORIZE THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT TO
RE-EMPLOY A RETIRED COUNTY EMPLOYEE ON AN INDEFINITE BASIS
(ALL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) is requesting that the Board approve a Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association (LACERA) member's return to work, thereby suspending the member's retirement benefits, and returning that member to active employment.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

Authorize the Department's re-employment of retired LACERA member, Dr. Una L. Morris, in compliance with the Los Angeles County (County) Employees Retirement Law of 1937.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Retired former County employee, Dr. Morris, employee number 050480, retired from active County service on January 12, 1993. Consistent with the Board's policy, adopted July 6, 1993, which allows the re-employment of retired County employees on an indefinite basis, the Department is requesting the Board's approval for the re-employment of retired Dr. Morris, into active County service as a Physician Specialist, Non Megaflex; Item #5476-80A, Schedule D27, Step 20, \$29,741.51 per month. Upon her return to County employment, Dr. Morris' retirement allowance will be cancelled until termination of her re-employment.

The Department has a critical need for a Physician Specialist with an expertise in the area of diagnostic radiology, within Custody Division's Medical Services Bureau (MSB). MSB performs

screening x-rays on all bookings coming through the Inmate Reception Center (IRC), ranging between 300 and 600 each day. These screening x-rays are required in order to identify inmates that may be infected with contagious diseases such as tuberculosis. In addition to the screening x-rays, medical providers order a wide range of radiographic examinations in the treatment of existing inmates on a daily basis.

Because of critical staffing shortages, MSB does not have a radiologist available to cover the evening shift. Subsequently, when injuries and illnesses come to the attention of the medical staff during this time period, the x-rays are performed; however, there are no radiologists on duty to read the results until the following morning. Although some of the x-ray studies can wait until the next morning to be read by a radiologist, many cannot. In these cases, the physician requesting the x-ray study is forced to transfer the patient out of the correctional facility to an acute care hospital where a radiologist is immediately available. Many of these expensive transfers need not occur if there is a radiologist working the evening shift. More importantly, the delay in reading the x-ray films the next morning, in the absence of an evening radiologist, may cause a fatal delay in the medical care of certain patients. Filling this position will minimize overtime expenditures and also help to alleviate much of the burden on the current radiologists by reducing weekend duty to every third weekend as opposed to every other weekend.

Dr. Morris has been a licensed physician and surgeon in the State of California since 1976. She attended medical school at the University of California San Francisco, graduating in 1974. She completed five years of post-graduate training and is certified by the American Board of Radiology in the field of diagnostic radiology. Prior to her retirement, she was a Physician Specialist for the County for more than eight years. Due to her extensive experience in this area, she is uniquely qualified to meet the critical needs of the Department and will greatly help to improve patient care.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

This recommendation is consistent with the County's Strategic Plan, Goal 1, Operational Effectiveness, maximizing public services by reinstating experienced former employees, and promoting sound and prudent fiscal practices by reducing overtime and training costs, thereby supporting and enhancing our public safety mission.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Funding for this position exists within the Department's salary and employee benefits fund.

The need for the Department to employ a full-time radiologist is justified by the large number of radiological studies performed on persons booked at the IRC. These studies are performed in order to screen for active tuberculosis or other life threatening pulmonary and cardiac diseases. Every new booking in IRC must be screened with a chest x-ray film, which ranges from 300 to 600 films in a 24-hour period. In addition to these screening films, an additional 100 to 300 various x-ray studies are ordered by medical providers for various other organs or parts of the body (i.e., skull, spine, ribs, joints, etc.) in a 24-hour period. In order to meet this demand, the Department should ideally have a radiologist physically present in the facility for a minimum of 16 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The position requires that the candidate be a physician licensed in the State of California who has completed training in an approved residency program in radiology and is Board Certified in radiology. Dr. Morris' background and experience make her a qualified applicant. She successfully passed the open competitive examination process and, based upon her experience and work history, was

selected for the position.

Although the possibility of contracting the position out to the County's Department of Health Services (DHS) does exist, there are many disadvantages. The demand for the position is constant and will continue to increase as the Department moves forward with bringing CT scans and ultrasound examinations inside the jail, as these examinations take much longer to be interpreted by the radiologist than x-ray films. Also, there is no guarantee that the Department will be able to contract a radiologist. DHS radiologists must be willing to come inside the jail in order to provide the reading of the examination and many may be unwilling to do so, as there is no financial benefit (the salaries for the two positions are the same). Additionally, DHS radiologists must successfully complete the background process prior to having approval to enter secure areas within the jail.

A review of Dr. Morris' work experience and education was conducted in order to determine the appropriate step placement within the established salary range. In addition to receiving a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from California Polytechnic University, a Doctor of Medicine from the University of California San Francisco and completion of a Residency in General Surgery and Radiology at Martin Luther King Hospital in Los Angeles, Dr. Morris has completed numerous fellowships in the areas of Ultrasound, Echocardiogram and Computerized Tomography. From 1984 to the present, Dr. Morris has been employed at the Women's Diagnostic Imaging Medical Center in Pasadena, California, where she earns a salary of \$30,000 per month. Based on these accomplishments and the wealth of knowledge and experience she has earned, the Department is requesting special consideration due to the critical nature of the position providing patient care radiology services within the MSB. The Department's request that she be placed onto Schedule D27, Step 20 of the Physician's Pay Plan is appropriate and in accordance with Article 7 Section 1 of the UAPD BU 324 Memorandum of Understanding. In addition to the base salary of \$28,191, Dr. Morris is eligible to receive a Board Certification Bonus of 5.5 percent, as she is certified in the field of General Diagnostic Radiology.

During her initial employment with the County, Dr. Morris was enrolled in LACERA Plan E (non-contributory). Upon her approval to return to active service, her current retirement allowance will be suspended effective one day prior to her new hire date. She will be enrolled in Plan G (General) and will begin accruing service and will be required to pay monthly contributions under the plan's rules. This service credit will not be added to the previous plan or used to re-calculate the previous retirement benefits already earned and paid.

At such time as Dr. Morris elects to retire from her second period of active service, LACERA will calculate the retirement benefit allowance for the second period of active service based solely on the retirement plan in effect and the service credit accumulated during this time frame. LACERA will reactive the original retirement benefit allowance suspended at the time of her return to active service. Although LACERA does not recalculate the retirement allowance, Dr. Morris will be credited with any COLA increases that the original retirement allowance would have accumulated. The two separate retirement benefit allowances will be added together and paid out in a single monthly payment.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

LACERA is governed by the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Law of 1937. This action is in compliance with Government Code Sections §31680.4 and §31680.5, pertaining to retired members returning to active membership. Prior to 1991, retired County employees were prohibited from returning to County employment, except temporarily and under limited circumstances.

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Government Code Section §31680.4 now permits retirees to return to work on a permanent basis. The Board's adoption of the policy on July 6, 1993, made that Government Code Section cooperative.

Dr. Morris has been medically evaluated through the County and determined not to be incapacitated to perform the duties of the position.

This Board letter has been reviewed by County Counsel.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

This action will have no negative impact on current services.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval by the Board, please return two adopted copies of this letter to the Department for further processing. The Department's contact for this requested Board action is Captain Judy A. Gerhardt, and she can be reached at (323) 526-5216.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leroy D. Baca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LEROY D. BACA

Sheriff

LDB:JAG:akt